

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Previously presented) A stream converting method, characterized in that it comprises the steps of:

separating a first transport stream (TS) into a first TS packet string formed from TS packets that have a prescribed packet identifier of at least one of video data and audio data, and a second TS packet string formed from TS packets that do not have the prescribed packet identifier;

converting a bit rate of the first TS packet string so as to produce a third TS packet string; and

multiplexing the produced third TS packet string and the second TS packet string so as to produce a second transport stream.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The stream converting method according to claim 1, characterized in that it comprises the steps of:

extracting reference time information from the first transport stream so as to produce reference time from the reference time information;

determining, with reference to the reference time, time of receipt of a TS packet including a head byte of a PES packet in the first TS packet string as first time of receipt;

determining, with reference to the reference time, time of receipt of a head byte of each TS packet forming the second TS packet string as second time of receipt; and

delaying the reference time by a prescribed time so as to produce delayed reference time, and in that the packet multiplexing step includes the steps of